



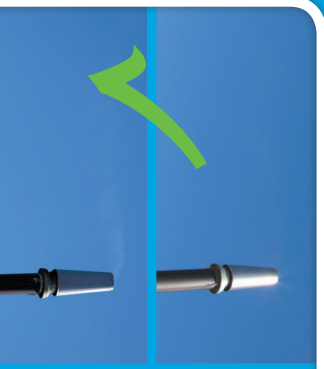
# Troubleshooting your smoky chimney



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Water and Environmental Regulation**

## Chimney checker

Check your chimney regularly for smoke whenever your wood heater is operating

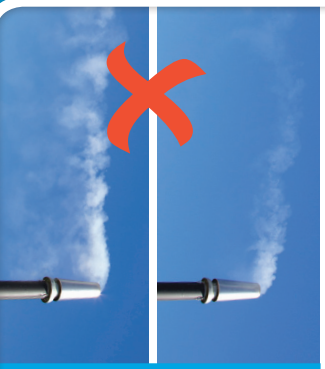


If your wood heater is **operating correctly** your chimney will emit **little or no smoke**.

- ✓ Air intake open to allow sufficient oxygen
- ✓ Firebox stacked correctly
- ✓ Dry firewood




Your chimney should smoke for **no more than five to 10 minutes** after lighting or refuelling.



If your **chimney is smoky** there is **something wrong**.

- ✗ Air intake closed down
- ✗ Not enough kindling
- ✗ Green firewood
- ✗ Firebox too full
- ✗ Chemically treated or painted wood



| Actions to minimise wood smoke   | I already do this<br>✓ or ✗ | I can do this<br>✓ or ✗ | Why is this action important?   |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Wood selection and storage</b>  |                             |                         |   |
| Use dry firewood that has been stored for at least one–two years.                          |                             |                         | When green or wet wood is burnt:  |
| Store firewood in a dry place with air circulating.  |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat energy is wasted.</li> <li>• Lower fire temperatures increases wood smoke.</li> </ul>   |
| Only burn wood that is not chemically treated or painted.                                  |                             |                         | Burning rubbish or chemically treated or painted wood is damaging to health.  |
| <b>Fire start up and refuelling</b>  |                             |                         |   |
| Light your wood heater using plenty of paper and small dry kindling.                       |                             |                         | If you establish a bright, hot fire quickly your wood heater will produce less smoke.   |
| Refuel your wood heater using small logs.  |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small logs ignite rapidly and minimise smoke on refuelling.</li> </ul>   |
| Leave space for air to circulate when refuelling fire.                                     |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air flow is essential to establishing and maintaining a bright fire.</li> </ul>  |
| Leave air controls open for 10 minutes after lighting or refuelling.                       |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A well operated wood heater emits little or no smoke within five to 10 minutes of lighting or refuelling.</li> </ul>   |
| Check your chimney for smoke after lighting or refuelling.                                 |                             |                         |   |
| <b>Burning practices</b>   |                             |                         |   |
| Maintain a bright hot fire at all times.   |                             |                         | A bright fire produces more heat and less smoke.  |
| Maintain air flow to the wood heater at all times.   |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the air intake is shut down, heat is wasted. Let your wood heater burn out overnight and re-light it in the morning.</li> </ul>   |
| Never shut down the air intake to dampen the wood heater, including overnight.             |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An insulated house will retain heat overnight.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Wood heater and chimney maintenance</b>   |                             |                         |   |
| Ensure your wood heater is compliant with AS/NZS 4013:2014 and AS/NZS 4012:2014.           |                             |                         | If wood smoke can be seen or smelt inside your house it is a health risk.   |
| Ensure your wood heater and flue installation is compliant with AS/NZS 2918:2018.          |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular inspection and cleaning is essential for safe and efficient use of your wood heater. Build up of soot and creosote in the flue reduces burning efficiency and is a fire risk.</li> </ul> |
| Ensure your chimney height is adequate and at a good distance from neighbours' properties. |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling a wood heater that does not comply with AS/NZS 4013:2014 and AS/NZS 4012:2014 is illegal.</li> </ul>   |
| Ensure your chimney has been inspected recently and cleaned if necessary.                  |                             |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Building Code of Australia requires wood heater and flue installation to comply with AS/NZS 2918:2018.</li> </ul>  |
| Use a vertical discharge venturi cowl on your chimney, not a cowl with a flue cap.         |                             |                         |    |